

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AS-01 CPR-01 SSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00

ACDA-07 /079 W

-----074417 241431Z /42

R 240942Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 432

INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANARIVO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 363

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SE

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES' WEEKLY REVEIW-JUNE 24

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. FOR THE BEING, WHILE SEYCHELLES SCENE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE IN AFTERMATH OF JUNE 5 COUP D' ETAT, EMBASSY PLANNING TO SUBMIT WEEKLY REPORT ON MISCELLANEOUS DEVELOPMENTS NOT COVERED IN OUR OTHER REPORTING. THIS FIRST SUBMISSION INCLUDES REPORTS ON THE PRESENT LOCAL MOOD, THE EXPECTED RETURN OF FORMER PRESIDENT MANCHAM'S EX-MINISTERS AND THE CONTINUED STRICT SECURITY MEASURES IN FORCE TO PROTECT RENE.

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM LOCAL JOURNALIST THAT NEW GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO REPLACE PRESENT NATIONAL FLAG WHICH COMBINED RED AND BLUE OF TWO POLITICAL PARTIES WITH ENTIRELY NEW DESIGN FEATURING ONLY COLORS OF RENE'S SEYCHELLES PEOPLE'S UNITED PARTY (SPUP). ALSO, NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM BEING WRITTEN.

2. PRESIDENT RENE TOLD RECENT VISITOR TO STATE HOUSE THAT EX-
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PRESIDENT MANCHAM'S PERSONAL EFFECTS, INCLUDING VALUABLE GIFTS FROM VARIOUS HEADS OF STATE, HAVE BEEN BOXED AND CRATED AND WILL BE TURNED OVER TO WHOEVER MANCHAM DESIGNATES TO RECEIVE THEM. MANCHAM'S YOUNG SON RICHARD, WHO WAS IN SEYCHELLES AT TIME OF JUNE 5 COUP, DEPARTED JUNE 22 TO JOIN HIS FATHER IN U.K. OTHER MEMBERS OF MANCHAM'S LARGE, WEALTHY MERCHANT FAMILY ARE UNDECIDED ABOUT

FUTURE PLANS. MEANWHILE, THEIR BUSINESSES ARE FUNCTIONING NORMALLY.

3. RENE HAS CONFIRMED PRIVATELY EARLIER PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT FIVE FORMER MINISTERS FROM MANCHAM'S PARTY WHO WERE ABROAD JUNE 5 CAN RETURN TO SEYCHELLES IF PRIOR NOTIFICATION IS GIVEN. EX-MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO ROBERT DELORIE, WHO WAS REGARDED AS TRUSTED MIDDLE-MAN IN DISCUSSIONS WHICH LED TO 1976 COALITION GOVERNMENT, RETURNED TO SEYCHELLES JUNE 20. DELORIE TOLD JUNE 22 THAT ALL EX-MINISTERS ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN "IN NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS" EXCEPT FOR FORMER MINISTER OF TOURISM AND AVIATION DAVID JOUBERT. JOUBERT ACCUMULATED LARGE LOCAL DEBTS AND HAS MANY PERSONAL ENEMIES. ACCORDING DELORIE, RENE HAS ADVISED JOUBERT TO STAY AWAY "FOR HIS OWN GOOD".

4. IN POPULAR MOVE, PRESIDENT RENE ANNOUNCED SALARY REDUCTIONS FOR HIMSELF AND HIS MINISTERS. IN CASE OF RENE, PAY CUT WOULD REDUCE PRESIDENTIAL SALARY FROM U.S. DOLS. 20,700 PER YEAR TAX FREE TO U.S. DOLS. 15,600 TAXABLE. EFFECT WOULD BE NET INCOME LOSS OF ABOUT 50 PER CENT. MINISTERIAL SALARIES ARE TO BE REDUCED BY 20 PER CENT. (NOTE: RENE'S SELF-IMPOSED REDUCTION IN SALARY, AND NOTIFICATION HE WILL PAY TAXES LIKE EVERYONE ELSE FOLLOWS EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT HE WILL NOT RESIDE IN STATE HOUSE AND WILL USE PRESIDENTIAL ROLLS ROYCE FOR IMPORTANT VISITORS ONLY).

5. GENERAL MOOD IN SEYCHELLES CONTINUES TO BE MOROSE AND WATCHFUL AS PEOPLE AWAIT SIGNS OF DIRECTIONS NEW GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE. RECENT ARRIVALS OF WEAPONS AND TANZANIAN MILITARY ADVISORS. CONFIDENTIAL

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(VICTORIA 329, VICTORIA 350, VICTORIA 359) HAVE FURTHER UNSETTLED A POPULACE UNACCUSTOMED TO ANY MILITARY ACTIVITY. MANY ARE CONCERNED WITH LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF ESTABLISHMENT OF PEOPLE'S MILITIA AND ARMY IN COUNTRY WHICH FELT UNARMED CORNER POLICEMEN PROVIDED ADEQUATE LEVEL OF SECURITY. STRONG FEELING PREVAILS THAT, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, SEYCHELLES IS EMBARKING ON UNCERTAIN COURSE AND WILL NEVER BE SAME AGAIN.

6. ALTHOUGH RENE TOLD VISITING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS SHORTLY AFTER THE COUP THAT IF HE EVER FELT THE NEED TO HAVE PERSONAL BODYGUARDS HE COULD NO LONGER BE PRESIDENT, IN FACT PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY IS FAR TIGHTER NOW THAN WAS THE CASE WITH MANCHAM. WE UNDERSTAND RENE STILL CARRYING REVOLVER AND IS NEVER SEEN IN PUBLIC WITHOUT BODYGUARDS. AT JUNE 22 RECEPTION AT RESIDENCE OF BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, RENE'S ARRIVAL WAS PRECEDED BY VISIT OF SEVEN SECURITY GUARDS WHO MADE THOROUGH INSPECTION OF PREMISES AND STATIONED THEMSELVES AT STRATEGIC POINTS FOR DURATION OF PRESIDENT'S STAY.

7. SOMEWHAT SURPRISING IS FACT THAT MANCHAM'S MORE MILITANT SUPPORTERS HAVE NOT YET, SO FAR AS EMBASSY AWARE, ENGAGED IN ANY OVERT ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. ACCORDING POLICE COMMISSIONER PILLAY, SECURITY FORCES WILL BE ESPECIALLY ALERT FOR POSSIBLE

TROUBLE DURING INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS NEXT WEEK.

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